



Horsforth School

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Our Ref: PCB/TRH

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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are all safe and well during this challenging time. There have been a few developments over the last week as well as some things we are doing as a school I would like to update you on.

Exams

The Government is consulting on their awarding method this year. They are seeking the views of teachers, parents, students and all other interested parties.

Please feel free to respond to the survey here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021?utm_source=18%20January%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Please be aware we will not be able to give answers to how grades will be set until the consultation is complete, the outcome and guidance is published and then a plan brought together on how we will implement it as a school.

The most important message is that assessments will have to be completed around May/June time for all Year 11 and 13 students so please keep working, keep trying and contact us if you need any help or support.

Lateral flow testing

As of Thursday we have tested 55 staff and 17 students using our lateral flow devices (all, thankfully, negative). Our physical space (the sports hall), training and procedures is all set up, complete and working well. We are well prepared for future mass testing (of students before they return) and our current routine testing (of staff, twice weekly).

To clarify, all lateral flow tests, the standard operating procedures and their application in school are fully approved.

'Opportunity and achievement for all'

I know there has been a furore in the media regarding the 'serial testing to enable' where close contacts of positive cases were to be allowed to attend if they pass a daily lateral flow test. This is something we had not put in place and is now not happening nationally other than in a few pilot schools.

Remote Learning Engagement

Now that we are 3 weeks into remote learning, we have a better picture of those students who are not engaging with live lessons or completing the work set. When subject staff do have concerns you will either be emailed by this staff member or the Curriculum Leader. Where there are serious and more widespread concerns, the Year Coordinator will contact you. Please do check your emails.

Continued Pastoral Support

Form Tutors continue to hold a live 'Tutor Period' 3 times a week, this is to check in with your child and see if there are any additional pastoral needs. Pastoral staff and year Coordinators are either phoning home or emailing individual students for welfare and work checks. Please do contact

pastoralhub@horsforthschool.org

if you think your child would benefit from this.

Next week's assemblies will focus on the importance of downtime from phones and social media to support our positive mental health message during this challenging time.

Parent Support

We work closely with Horsforth Children's Services and I am pleased to announce that they are offering a parenting course, 'Life through the eyes of a teenager'. This is a free course for parents and carers who might be struggling with their child and who need support or advice. This has proved popular in the past and it may prove useful under the current climate with families encountering new issues due to lockdown. The course provides the skills and tools to enable parents to provide practical and emotional support for their teenagers to help them thrive and build the skills they need for adulthood and it also provides an opportunity to talk to other parents about their experiences.

There are two programmes this term – the first will be on Wednesdays 27th January and 3rd and 10th February from 7pm to 8pm and the second will also be on Wednesdays 16th, 23rd and 30th March, again at 7pm to 8pm. For further details, please email info@horsforthchildrensservices.co.uk or call Horsforth Children's Services on 0113 336 7724.

Mandarin Excellence Programme

We are part of the extremely prestigious Mandarin Excellence Programme where students in Year 7 can choose to study Mandarin Chinese through to Year 11; led by our wonderful Mandarin teacher Mrs Zhang. The impact report has just been published which you can see here:

<https://ci.ioe.ac.uk/mep-independent-evaluation/>

And the joint UCL, British Council and Confucius Institute press release is here.

https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/mandarin-celebration?utm_source=twitter-schools&utm_medium=social-managed&utm_campaign=mep&utm_content=rep

We are one of only two Leeds Schools who take part and are really proud to offer this opportunity to our students as well as being part of a programme which is seen as "one of the most successful the Department for Education has ever run".

'Opportunity and achievement for all'

Re-opening

I have no information regarding when we could possibly re-open or what that would look like. The Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson, has announced schools will be given 2 clear weeks of notice and that it would happen “as soon as scientific and health advice is there”, and he hoped it would happen “before Easter”.

We are, as always, missing the face to face contact with our students and whilst I tremendously appreciate your feedback and praise on remote learning we look forward to the time when we do not need to do this.

I hope you are all doing well during lockdown. The local picture is that cases are dropping and that the vaccine programme is continuing effectively. I am optimistic, hopeful and positive that we have light at the end of the tunnel even if we do not know how far away that is.

Yours faithfully

Dr P Bell
Headteacher